Remarks

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated November 3, 2005 and is due on or before February 3, 2006,

Delete Claims 2, 3 and 28 and add new Claims 30, 31 and 32.

Claims 1, 4 – 27, 29, and 30 - 32 remain in this application.

Claims 1-5, 7-19 and 21-38 were rejected as being anticipated by Leoutsakos, USP 6871364. Claims 6, 20 and 29 where rejected as being obvious over Leoutsakos in view of Widmer, USP 4560145.

Reconsideration of the Claims is respectfully requested.

The present invention and the prior art show various inflatable lifting devices (lifts), however, as related below there are substantial differences between the prior art and the present invention.

One of the novel features of the present invention is the use of preferably 2 inflatable members that are configured to move horizontally and vertically relative to one another. More particularly, when the lift/lift platform is in its lowered position, the upper inflatable member is off-set relative to the lower inflatable member. As the lift moves upwardly, the upper member moves horizontally and vertically to that when in the raised or upper position, the upper inflatable member is again offset from the lower inflatable member but this off-set is in a direction opposite to the off-set when the inflatable members are in the lowered position. This feature is not shown in the prior art. The above relationship is recited in Claim 1 (Amended), Claim 17 (Amended) and Claims 24 (Amended). The ambiguity in Claim 17 has been corrected. Claims 2, 3 and 28 have been deleted to be able present an additional claim without incurring additional expense.

Leoutsakos teaches a lift for a patient and comprises an inflatable member 12 having a plurality of concentric, inflatable rings or convolutions. The lift in Leoutsakos is movable from a lowered to a raised position, however, there is no teaching in Leoutsakos that any of the inflatable convolutions when in the lowered position are off-set from the lowest of the convolutions. Quite the contrary, Leoutsakos teaches in his Figures 5a and 5b that the convolutions, when lowered are placed, stored or arranged

in a concentric orientation, one on top of the other. Leoutsakos does not teach the present invention.

Widmer teaches the use of a plurality of concentric, inflatable annular sections arranged with the inflatable section having the largest diameter at the bottom and the inflatable section with the smallest diameter at the top. When inflated the center of each section is concentric (see Figures 1 of Widmer) to the rest of the sections and when deflated the center of each section remains concentric to the other rings (see Figure 3). Widmer also does not teach the present invention.

Further, none of the prior art teach locating the hinges for the lift platform on an underside of the lift platform which contributes to the ability of being able to collapse the mechanism to a small vertical dimension. As mentioned above, the prior art does not show the off-set placement of the various inflatable members and further does not show that the upper inflatable member when in the down or lowered condition partially fits within and partially fits without the lower inflatable member.

In view of the aforementioned, it is respectfully urged that the present application be reconsidered, the claims allowed, and the case passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Markell Seitzman
Reg. No. 28,756

(586) 726-3905
(586) 726-4172 (fax)